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Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 08620 241744Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 NSF-01 NAS-01 FEA-01
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TGEN UK TECH OSCI
SUBJECT: U.S./UK SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGES:
HAVE THEY SERIOUSLY DECLINED?

REF: STATE 67701

1. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH UK SCIENTIFIC ADMINISTRATORS AND WITH U.S. SCIENTISTS ASSOCIATED PRIMARILY WITH MILITARY RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS BASED IN LONDON (EOARD, EUROPEAN OFFICE OF AEROSPACE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AFSC); ONRL, OFFICE OF NAVAL RESEARCH LONDON; AND UNITED STATES ARMY RESEARCH AND STANDARDIZATION GROUP (EUROPE)), WE HAVE FOUND LITTLE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSITION THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SERIOUS DECLINE IN THE LEVEL OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES. AT OUR REQUEST, THE SCIENCE RESEARCH
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PAGE 02 LONDON 08620 241744Z

COUNCIL UNDERTOOK AN INFORMAL SOUNDING AMONG THE VARIOUS RESEARCH COUNCILS, THE ROYAL SOCIETY, THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE, ETC. AND CONCLUDED THAT, WHILE IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE A DEFINITIVE JUDGMENT BECAUSE SO MANY DIFFERENT SOURCES OF FUNDS AND PROGRAMS ARE INVOLVED, IT IS GENERALLY BELIEVED THAT THERE HAS NOT BEEN A SIGNIFICANT DIMINUTION IN THE LEVEL OF EXCHANGES CON-

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

DUCTED IN THE CIVILIAN SECTOR. MOREOVER, THE SPECIFIC FIGURES AVAILABLE FROM THE U.S. MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS INDICATE THAT, IF ANYTHING, THERE RECENTLY HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF EXCHANGES SPONSORED BY USG LABORATORIES AND THE FUNDING DEVOTED TO THEM.

2. WE DO UNDERSTAND THERE ARE INVARIABLY MORE APPLICATIONS FOR EXCHANGE VISITS BETWEEN THE UK AND THE U.S. THAN THERE IS AVAILABLE FUNDING. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS POINTED OUT THAT IN RECENT YEARS THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT FEWER APPLICANTS BECAUSE OF THE "REENTRY PROBLEM" IN BRITAIN, I.E. THE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT IN ONE'S AREA OF SPECIALIZATION AFTER AN EXTENDED EXCHANGE VISIT ABROAD.

3. ONE INTERESTING FACT THAT EMERGED FROM OUR DISCUSSIONS IS THAT THE U.S./UK EXCHANGE RELATIONSHIP IS IN BETTER SHAPE THAN COMPARABLE UK PROGRAMS INVOLVING COUNTRIES ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE. IT WAS NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THERE ARE AN INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF QUALIFIED APPLICANTS FOR THE UK/FRENCH EXCHANGE PROGRAM TO MAKE USE OF THE FUNDS AVAILABLE. THIS IS ATTRIBUTED PARTIALLY TO THE LANGUAGE BARRIER AS WELL AS THE REENTRY PROBLEM.

4. OUR CONCLUSION NECESSARILY IS THAT EXCHANGES AT THE WORKING LEVEL ARE PROCEEDING ON AN ACCEPTABLE BASIS. STRONG INTERACTION OCCURS AT THE GRASS ROOTS AND THERE IS SOME CROSS-FUNDING, ALTHOUGH THE FLOW OF FUNDS IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LARGELY FROM THE U.S. TO THE UK. THIS IS NOT TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT ADDITIONAL FUNDS AND PUBLICITY IN THE UNIVERSITIES ESPECIALLY WOULD NOT BE WELCOMED IN CONNECTION WITH AN EXPANSION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS.

5. REGRETFULLY, WE MUST ADD ONE DISAPPOINTING NOTE. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND VISITS AT THE SCIENCE POLICY LEVEL HAS BEEN QUITE LIMITED. ONE WAY TO REMEDY THIS SITUATION WOULD BE TO UNDERTAKE A PERSONNEL EXCHANGE PROGRAM BETWEEN EACH OF THE UK RESEARCH COUNCILS AND THE APPROPRIATE USG AGENCY, NSF, NIH, ETC., ON POSSIBLY A ONE YEAR BASIS. ANOTHER WORTHWHILE STEP WOULD BE TO INITIATE AN NSF-OMB TEAM STUDY OF THE R AND D CUSTOMER-CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP AS IMPLEMENTED IN THE UK. VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SCIENCE POLICY AREA SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED.

MILLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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